

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 9-14 and 16-20 are pending in this application. By this amendment, Claims 9 and 16 have been amended; and Claims 1-8 and 15 have been canceled. Support for the amendment to Claim 9 is found, by way of non-limiting example, on page 14 of the specification and in particular lines 21-23. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite; Claims 1, 3-6, 9-12 and 15-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Brittain et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,450,869, hereinafter “Brittain”); Claims 2 and 13-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brittain in view of Davies et al. (published European Patent Application No. 0585047 A2, hereinafter “Davies”); and Claims 7-8 and 19-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brittain in view of Miyauchi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,800,963 B2, hereinafter “Miyauchi”).

Responsive to the rejection of Claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite, Claim 3 has been canceled. It is respectfully submitted that this rejection is thereby rendered moot.

Responsive to the rejections of Claims 1-20 over the cited references, Claims 1-8 and 15 have been canceled and independent Claim 9 has been amended. Claim 9 now recites “the electric generator comprises a thermoelectric converter composed of a thermoelectric semiconductor which contains, as a major component thereof, either one of skutterudite, or a thermoelectric semiconductor having a filled skutterudite-type crystal structure or half-Heusler-type compound.” It is respectfully submitted that this recited feature is neither

disclosed by nor rendered obvious by Brittain, Davies, Miyauchi or any conceivable combination thereof.

Brittain describes a thermoelectric generator or converter 38 beginning in column 5, line 14. It is described as including thermoelectric subassemblies, strips or rows 96, as shown in detail in FIGs. 5a and 5b to 14. The thermoelectric elements are described in column 5, lines 65-68 as “composed of a suitable material having thermoelectric properties, such as lead telluride, and are doped in a known way to alternate in the subassemblies between P-type and N-type.” There is no description in Brittain of a thermoelectric converter composed of a thermoelectric semiconductor which contains, as a major component thereof, either one of skutterudite, or a thermoelectric semiconductor having a filled skutterudite-type crystal structure or half-Heusler-type compound as recited in amended Claim 9.

Nor do Davies or Miyauchi correct the deficiencies of Brittain as described above.

More specifically, Davies describes purification of the exhaust emissions from internal combustion engine exhausts using a catalyst and does not describe a thermoelectric generator or converter.

Miyauchi describes a fuel cell and makes no mention of thermoelectric semiconductor skutterudite, skutterudite-type crystal or half-Heusler-type compound.

It is respectfully submitted that dependent Claims 10-14 and 16-20 are patentable at least for the reasons argued above with regard to Claim 9 from which they depend.

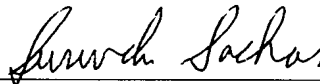
Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejections of Claims 9-14 and 16-20 be reconsidered and withdrawn, and that Claims 9-14 and 16-20 be found allowable.

Consequently, for the reasons discussed in detail above, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. Therefore, a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned representative at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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